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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. RCA 87482C
 First Inventor or Application Identifier Chaney
 Title APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR...
 Express Mail Label No. EL533623894US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents

1. ☒ * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
 (Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☐ Specification [Total Pages]
 (preferred arrangement set forth below)
- Descriptive title of the invention
 - Cross References to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
 - Background of the invention
 - Brief Summary of the invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claim(s)
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. ☐ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets]
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages]
- a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
- b. ☒ Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
 (for continuation/divisional with Box 16 completed)
- i. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
 Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

NOTE FOR ITEMS 1 & 13: IN ORDER TO BE ENTITLED TO PAY SMALL ENTITY FEES, A SMALL ENTITY STATEMENT IS REQUIRED (37 C.F.R. § 1.27), EXCEPT IF ONE FILED IN A PRIOR APPLICATION IS RELIED UPON (37 C.F.R. § 1.28).

ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents
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 Washington, DC 20231

5. ☐ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
 (if applicable, all necessary)
- a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
- b. ☐ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
- c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

7. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
8. ☐ 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement ☐ Power of Attorney
 (when there is an assignee)
9. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
10. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
11. ☒ Preliminary Amendment
12. ☐ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
 (Should be specifically itemized)
13. ☐ * Small Entity Statement(s) ☐ Statement filed in prior application
 (PTO/SB/09-12) Status still proper and desired
14. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
 (if foreign priority is claimed)
15. ☐ Other:

16. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment:

☐ Continuation ☒ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No: 09,176,567
 Prior application information: Examiner Kostak Group / Art Unit: 2711

For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

17. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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09/528507

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: John W. Chaney, et al.

5 Ser. No.:

Filed: Herewith

For: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR PROCESSING A
PROGRAM GUIDE IN A DIGITAL VIDEO SYSTEM

Examiner:

10 Art Unit:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT IN DIVISIONAL APPLICATION

Hon. Assistant Commissioner for Patents

15 Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

20 Prior to examination and calculation of fees, please enter the
following preliminary amendment in the present divisional application.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

25 On page 1, after line 1, please insert --This application is a divisional
application of U.S. Pat. Appln. Ser. No. 09/176,567, which is a divisional
application of U.S. Pat. Appln. Ser. No. 08/806,574, now U.S. Pat. No.
5,867,207, which is a divisional application of U.S. Pat. Appln. Ser. No.
08/363,235, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,642,153.--

30

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 24-44 and add new claims 45-55 as follows:

45. A signal processing apparatus, comprising:

means for receiving a packetized signal; and

means for identifying and processing program guide information

35 included in said packetized signal and for identifying and processing a selected
program from one of a plurality of channels in response to said program guide
information, said program guide information comprising a sequence of data

blocks including, a segment map block that includes information about the partitioning of said plurality of channels into segments and a channel to service segment map block that including information relating specific channels of said plurality of channels with respective channel identifier data.

5

46. The signal processing apparatus of claim 45, wherein said sequence of data blocks further comprises a program information segment map block that includes program related information associated with each program on each of said plurality of channels.

10

47. The signal processing apparatus of claim 46, wherein said sequence of data blocks further comprises an additional program guide data block that includes information for identifying and processing a second program guide.

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48. The signal processing apparatus of claim 47, wherein said additional program guide data block includes program information relating to the theme and rating of a selected program.

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49. The signal processing apparatus of claim 47, wherein said second program guide includes a sequence of data blocks including a second channel to service segment map block that includes second information relating specific channels of said plurality of channels with respective channel identifier data and a second program information segment map block that includes second program related information associated with each program on each of said plurality of channels.

25

50. The signal processing apparatus of claim 47, wherein said program guide includes information relating to programs transmitted during a first time interval and said second program guide includes information relating

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to programs transmitted during a second time interval, said second time interval following said first time interval.

51. A method of processing a packetized signal, the method comprising the steps of:

acquiring program guide information included in the packetized signal;

identifying and processing a sequence of data blocks in the program guide information, the sequence of data blocks including a segment map block that includes information about the partitioning of said plurality of channels into segments and a channel to service segment map block that including information relating specific channels of said plurality of channels with respective channel identifier data; and

acquiring a selected program from one of a plurality of channels in response to the information in the sequence of data blocks.

52. The method according to claim 51, wherein the identifying step includes identifying and processing a program information segment map block that includes program related information associated with each program on each of said plurality of channels.

53. The method according to claim 52, wherein the identifying step further includes identifying and processing an additional program guide data block that includes information for identifying and processing a second program guide.

54. The method according to claim 53, further comprising the step of identifying and processing from the additional program guide data block a sequence of data blocks including a second channel to service segment map block that includes second information relating specific channels of said plurality of channels with respective channel identifier data and a second

program information segment map block that includes second program related information associated with each program on each of said plurality of channels.

55. The method according to claim 54, wherein the second acquiring step comprises acquiring a first program during a first time interval in response to the program guide and acquiring a second program during a second time interval in response to the second program guide, the second time interval following the first time interval.

REMARKS

If a fee is due with regard to the present preliminary amendment, please charge the fee to Deposit Account 07-0832. Should any questions arise regarding any of the above, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at 609-734-9650.

Respectfully submitted,
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CONSUMER INTERFACE FOR A DIGITAL TELEVISION SYSTEM

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention is related to the field of digital communications systems, and is described with reference to a digital satellite television system, but also may be applicable to a digital cable system or digital terrestrial broadcast system. The invention also concerns screen displays and user menus for
10 controlling such a system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

 In a satellite television communication system, the satellite receives a signal representing audio, video, or data
15 information from an earth-based transmitter. The satellite amplifies and rebroadcasts this signal to a plurality of receivers, located at the homes of consumers, via transponders operating at specified frequencies and having given bandwidths. Such a system includes an uplink transmitting portion (earth to satellite),
20 an earth-orbiting satellite receiving and transmitting unit, and a downlink portion (satellite to earth) including a receiver located at the user's residence. The subject matter of the present invention is especially concerned with a downlink receiving unit designed for relatively easy installation at the user's residence.

25 The present system utilizes two satellites within a few degrees of each other in geosynchronous earth-orbit stationed at an altitude of 22,300 miles, approximately over the state of Texas. With this arrangement, receivers located anywhere in the contiguous 48 states of the United States can receive signals from
30 both satellites on the same receiving antenna dish without having to reposition the antenna dish. Each satellite transmits its signals with a respective polarization. Selecting a satellite for reception of its signals is accomplished at the receiving antenna by selecting those signals with the appropriate polarization. Each satellite
35 includes sixteen transponders for transmitting signals to the receiving antenna dish over a range of frequencies. Each transponder is time-multiplexed to convey a plurality of television channels (e.g., six to eight channels), substantially

simultaneously. The satellite signals are transmitted in compressed and packetized form, and comprise television and ancillary data signals. Because the system is capable of carrying as many as two hundred fifty-six channels, some television
5 program selection method and apparatus, which is easy to understand and operate, must be provided for the user.

If we look to conventional analog VHF and UHF broadcast television as a guide, we find that the solution provided therein is of little help, for the following reasons. The channel
10 number of a given television station corresponds to a fixed band of frequencies. In other words, channel 6 in the United States is regulated to occupy the range from 82-88 MHz. Most non-technical consumers have no understanding of the frequency allocations of the television broadcast bands. Instead, they tune a
15 desired channel by entering its channel number into their receiver. Their receiver is programmed with the proper information to perform the required tuning to the desired channel by generating the appropriate bandswitching and tuning commands, in response to the entering of the channel number by
20 the user. It is possible for manufacturers to build a fixed channel number-to-frequency translation arrangement into each television receiver, only because the relationship between channel number and frequency band must conform to a broadcast standard.

This fixed-frequency standard is acceptable to the
25 broadcasters because their transmitting equipment is readily accessible for maintenance purposes due to its location on the ground. If the transmitter malfunctions, it can be repaired and the station can be back "on-the-air" at its designated frequency
30 band in a relatively short time. In contrast, a fixed-frequency arrangement for a satellite is undesirable because of the practical inaccessibility of an orbiting satellite. In the event that a transponder malfunctions, that transponder is thereafter
35 inoperative, essentially forever, and receivers programmed to tune that transponder to receive a desired television program would not receive a usable signal. In such an event, the receiver will have lost the desired television channels and will have no idea how to find them.

A satellite receiver may be programmed to perform a function similar to the common autoprogramming function, in which a television receiver searches for all active channels and records detection of each as it is found. If such a system is used after a transponder failure, the failed transponder will be noted and a new active transponder will be found (assuming that the programming has been moved to a new transponder by ground-based control personnel). The user's receiver would then have to perform an internal remapping to associate the desired channel with the new transponder. However, in the event that a power supply module failed in the satellite, several transponders which may receive power from that module may cease transmitting at once. In such an event, the autoprogramming solution given above will not work because several new transponders will be found at the same time as several old transponders are noted as missing. In such a case, the receiver will have no way of allocating the received signals to their proper channels. Moreover, as noted above, since each transponder conveys six to eight channels, the channels assigned to the failed transponder may be distributed among several still-functioning transponders. In that case the receiving antenna will have access to all of the television channels, but the receiver will, quite literally, not know where to look for those channels which have been moved.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A television system for receiving a plurality of digitally-encoded television programs includes circuitry for selecting a particular digital data transmission channel from a plurality of digital data transmission channels containing a desired digitally-encoded television program in response to a control signal, at least one of the data transmission channels also including television program schedule data. The system also includes user-operable data entry circuitry for entering data, and a controller for generating the above-noted control signal in response to user-entered data. The controller selects a virtual channel from a plurality of virtual channels in response to user-entered data, each virtual channel being subject to reassignment to a different one of said a plurality of digital data transmission

channels, the television program schedule data defining the relationship of each of the television programs to respective ones of the plurality of digital data transmission channels. Each digital transmission channel provides a "packetized digital data multiplex" (PDDM) of program guides, audio, video and data. As such, the subject system provides a comprehensive and logical organization for transmission of multiple television programs in digital form useful in both satellite and terrestrial broadcasting.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIGURES 1 and 2 are illustrations of a typical transmitted data stream from a transponder in accordance with the invention.

15 FIGURE 3 is an illustration of a program guide screen display in accordance with the invention.

FIGURE 4 is an illustration of segmentation of the master program guide and special program guides in accordance with the invention.

20 FIGURES 5a and 5b are illustrations of program data structures in accordance with the invention.

FIGURE 6 is a block diagram of a satellite transmitting/receiving system according to the invention.

FIGURE 7 is a block diagram of the IRD receiver unit.

25 FIGURE 8 is a block diagram of a portion of the IRD receiver unit of FIGURES 6 and 7, in detail.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

30 In the subject system, the information necessary to select a given television program is not fixedly-programmed into each receiver but is rather is down-loaded from the satellite continually on each transponder. The television program selection information comprises a set of data known as a Master Program Guide (MPG), which relates television program titles, their start and end times, a virtual channel number to be displayed to the user, and information allocating virtual channels to transponder frequencies and to a position in the time-multiplexed data stream

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transmitted by the particular transponder. In a system according to the subject invention, it is not possible to tune any channel until the first master program guide is received from the satellite, because the receiver literally does not know where any channel is located, in terms of frequency and position (i.e. data time slot) within the data stream of any transponder. The concept of virtual channels allows allocation of virtual channel numbers by category, such as, sports, movies, news. This realization, in turn, allows for active and inactive virtual channels. That is, ten virtual channels assigned to sporting events on a Saturday afternoon, may be inactivated after the games and may provide enough bandwidth to support, for example, twenty movie channels. Thus, the user has the perception, that he has many more channels than, in fact, could be supported simultaneously, by the available bandwidth. Another words, the concept of virtual channels allows time-multiplexing of the system bandwidth. Moreover, it allows a television program requiring greater bandwidth (such as a sporting event) to "borrow" bits from a second television program on the same transponder which does not require as great a bandwidth (such as a "talk show"). Thus, the available bandwidth of a given transponder can be reallocated, as needed, from one virtual channel to another.

Advantageously, the system is totally flexible in that any program may be assigned, or reassigned at any master program guide transmission time, to any transponder or data time slot, in a fashion which is completely transparent to the user, who sees only the unchanged program title and virtual channel. Thus, the problem of multiple failed transponders can be solved without the user even being aware that it has occurred, by a quickly performed reallocation of the affected television programs to functioning transponders with unused data time slots, and by transmitting a new program guide to the users.

A master program guide is preferably transmitted on all transponders with the television program video and audio data, and is repeated periodically, for example, every 2 seconds. The master program guide is not encrypted, and can be used by the receiver immediately after being received and stored. The master program guide, once received, is maintained in a memory

unit in the receiver, and updated periodically, for example every 30 minutes. Retention of the master program guide allows instantaneous television program selection because the necessary selection data are always available. If the master program guide were to be discarded after using it to select a television program, then a delay of at least two seconds would be incurred while a new program guide was acquired, before any further television program selections could be performed.

As noted above, the system is capable of transmitting hundreds of programs. Each program may include a number of services. A service is defined herein as a program component, such as a video signal, an audio signal, a closed caption signal, or other data, including executable computer programs for an appropriate receiver. Each service of each program is identified by a unique Service Component Identifier (SCID). The information for the respective services is transmitted in packets of predetermined amounts of data(e.g., 130 bytes) and each packet includes an SCID corresponding to the service.

A representation of a typical data stream from one of the transponders is shown in FIGURE 1, and a typical packet from that data stream is shown in FIGURE 2. In FIGURE 1, a string of boxes represents signal packets which are components of a plurality of different television programs transmitted by a given transponder. Packets with letters having like subscripts represent components of a single television program. For example, packet identified as V₁, A₁ and D₁, represent video, audio, and data for program 1. In the upper line of the string of packets, the respective components of a particular program are shown grouped together. However, it is not necessary to group components of a particular program together, as indicated by the packet sequence in the middle of the string. Moreover, there is no requirement to place the packets of a string in any particular order.

The string of packets shown in FIGURE 2, represents three time multiplexed programs, programs 1, 2, and 3, plus packets representing a program guide (packets D4). It is important to note that the data of the program guide interrelates program components and virtual channels by virtue of the SCID. The respective packets are arranged to include a prefix and a

payload as shown in FIGURE 2. The prefix of this example includes two 8-bit bytes comprising five fields, four of which are 1-byte fields (P,BB,CF,CS), and one 12-bit field (SCID). The Payload portion contains the actual information to be received and processed. The exemplary prefix includes a 1-bit priority field (P); a 1-bit boundary field (BB), which indicates boundaries between significant signal changes; a 1-bit field (CF), which indicates whether or not the payload is scrambled; a 1-bit field (CS), which indicates which one of two descrambling keys is to be used to descramble a scrambled payload; and a 12-bit SCID. The remainder of the packet comprises the payload which may include error code parity bits appended to the end of the payload data.

A master program guide comprises packetized data formatted as defined above, and is assigned a specific SCID, such as, 0000 0000 0001. A master program guide comprises four sequential blocks of data, designated, SEGM, APGD, CSSM1 . . . CSSMnseg, and PISM1 . . . PISMnseg, to be described below.

A master program guide typically includes television schedules for the next two hours, but may include schedules for four, six, or eight hours depending on the size of the memory allocated to store it in the receiver. In addition to the master program guide, there is also provided one or more special program guides (SPG), containing additional data, such as, for example, television program schedules for the following eight hours. That is, the master guide holds all information necessary for selecting current television programs, and the special guides contain information about future television programs. Special guides are downloaded from the satellite as needed and are not retained in memory due to their large size. As shown in FIGURE 2, both the master program guide and special program guides are partitioned into a plurality of segments or portions (from 0 to 15) with an index "nseg" indicating the current number of segments comprising the special guide. Each segment carries program information for one or more virtual channels which range from 100 to 999. FIGURE 2 shows only an exemplary allocation of virtual channels to segments, and other groupings can be, and are, made at the discretion of the operators at the satellite uplink center. Each special guide segment includes two sequential blocks

of data, CSSM1 . . . CSSMnseg, and PISM1 . . . PISMnseg, also to be described below.

5 The Segment Map (SEGM) block of the master program guide contains information about the partitioning of the channel space into segments, and the number of segments. The Additional
10 Program Guide Data (APGD) block contains a program guide map which indicates which special program guide segments are active, and their location (i.e., the particular transponder carrying the segment), as well as the SCIDs of the respective segments. The
15 APGD block contains program information relating to ratings and theme of a particular television program. The APGD also includes a program guide map associating special guide segments with respective names, numbers, and types.

20 The master guide and every special guide contain a Channel to Service Segment Map (CSSM) block and a Program Information Segment Map (PISM) block. The CSSM describes virtual channels (channel name, call letters, channel number, type, . . .) which are in the corresponding segment. The PISM block contains linked lists of program information (title, start time,
25 duration, rating, category, . . .) that are on each virtual channel described in the corresponding CSSM.

Relevant portions of the data structures shown in FIGURES 3, 4, 5a and 5b will be referred to in the following description of the program selection process. Referring to FIGURE
30 3, a user selects a television program for viewing, by moving a cursor (via operation of remote control up, down, right, and left, direction control keys) to a block of the program guide screen display which contains the name of the desired program. The remote control unit is not shown for simplicity. When a SELECT
35 key of the remote control is pressed, the current x and y position of the cursor is evaluated to derive virtual channel and program time information.

As shown in FIGURE 4, and as noted above, the master program guide and special program guides are divided into
40 segments (which may be as little as one segment or as many as 16). The lowest virtual channel (100) is always allocated as the first channel of seg (0). Each segment contains channel and program information for a defined number of virtual channels.

Upon deriving the virtual channel number from the X and Y cursor position information, the virtual channel number is used to point into the proper segment of the particular program guide (either master program guide, or a special program guide) to
5 retrieve the specific channel information and program information. Specifically, the Channel Information (CI) Records in the CSSM (Channel to Service Segment Map) are a fixed length of seventeen bytes and contain such items as, the number of SCIDs in use (typically 2, audio and video), the channel transponder (Chan
10 Xpndr) the channel number and short name (i.e., typically 4 characters), and a pointer into the linked program information. In order to access any specific Channel Information (CI) it is only required to repeatedly add 17 to a base value. Program information includes the start day and time of the program, the
15 number of 30 minute slots it occupies, the theme category (i.e., drama, sports, comedy), and parental rating.

Once the channel transponder carrying a desired television program is tuned, the data packets containing the audio and video information for that program can be selected from the
20 data stream received from the transponder by examining the data packets for the proper SCID (Service Component Identifier) 12 bit code. If the SCID of the currently received data packet matches the SCID of the desired television program as listed in the program guide, then the data packet is routed to the proper data
25 processing sections of the receiver, if the SCID of a particular packet does not match the SCID of the desired television program as listed in the program guide, then that data packet is discarded.

A brief description of system hardware, suitable for implementing the above-described invention, now follows. In
30 FIGURE 6, a transmitter 601 processes a data signal from a source 614 (e.g., a television signal source) and transmits it to a satellite 613 which receives and rebroadcasts the signal to a receiver 612. Transmitter 601 includes an encoder 602, a modulator/forward error corrector (FEC) 603, and an uplink unit 604. Encoder 602
35 compresses and encodes signals from source 614 according to a predetermined standard such as MPEG. MPEG is an international standard developed by the Moving Picture Expert Group of the International Standards Organization for coded representation of

moving pictures and associated audio stored on digital storage medium. An encoded signal from unit 602 is supplied to modulator/Forward Error Corrector (FEC) 603, which encodes the signal with error correction data, and Quaternary Phase Shift Key (QPSK) modulates the encoded signal onto a carrier. Both
5 convolutional and Reed-Solomon (RS) block coding are performed in block 603.

Uplink unit 604 transmits the compressed and encoded signal to satellite 613, which broadcasts the signal to a
10 selected geographic reception area. In this embodiment, satellite 613 operates in two modes, which trade off channel capacity for transmission power, or transmission power for channel capacity. In the first mode, satellite 613 illustratively transmits sixteen channels at 120 watts each. In the second mode, satellite 613
15 transmits eight channels at 240 watts each.

The signal from satellite 613 is received by an antenna dish 605 coupled to an input of a so-called set-top receiver 612 (i.e., an interface device situated atop a television receiver). Receiver 612 includes a demodulator/Forward Error Correction
20 (FEC) decoder 607 to demodulate the signal and to decode the error correction data, a microprocessor 606, which operates interactively with demodulator/FEC unit 607, and a transport unit 608 to transport the signal to an appropriate decoder within unit 609 depending on the content of the signal, i.e., audio or video
25 information. Transport unit 608 receives corrected data packets from unit 607 and checks the header of each packet to determine its routing. Decoders in unit 609 decode the signal and remove added transport data, if used. An NTSC Encoder 610 encodes the decoded signal to a format suitable for use by signal processing
30 circuits in a standard NTSC consumer television receiver 611.

FIGURE 7 is a block diagram showing the components of the IRD receiver system including the outdoor antenna dish unit 7-5. The IRD includes a block 707 including a tuner 734 and a demodulator unit 735 for tuning various television signals. The
35 IRD is under control of a microcontroller 706, which also controls the interfaces between the IRD and a telephone network via a telephone modem 734, between the IRD and a user via an IR link 725 and between the IRD and a television receiver via an MPEG

decoder 723, a video encoder 721, and an RF modulator 722, and finally, between the IRD unit and a user via a smart card interface and transport IC 708.

Referring now to FIGURE 8, demodulator/FEC unit 807
5 acquires, demodulates, and decodes the data signal which is received from antenna dish 805. This unit includes a tuner 834, a Quaternary Phase Shift Key (QPSK) demodulator 835, a Viterbi convolutional decoder 836, a de-interleaver 837, and a Reed-Solomon (RS) decoder 838, all of conventional design, arranged as
10 shown.

Tuner 834 receives an input signal from antenna dish 805. Based upon a user's channel selection, a control unit 806 (i.e., a microprocessor) sends a frequency signal to tuner 834. This
15 signal cause tuner 834 to tune to the appropriate channel and to downconvert the received signal in frequency in response to the tuning frequency signal sent to tuner 834 from microprocessor 806. An output signal from tuner 34 is provided to QPSK demodulator 835.

QPSK demodulator 835 locks onto (synchronizes with)
20 the tuned channel, demodulates the modulated data signal, and generates a signal indicative of the quality of the demodulated signal. Demodulator 835 demodulates the modulated input data signal regardless of the error correction code rate of the received data signal. Phase-locked loop circuitry in demodulator 835
25 synchronizes the operation of demodulator 835 with the input signal using well-known techniques. Demodulator 835 generates a Demodulator Lock output control signal that indicates whether or not demodulator 835 is synchronized with the input signal, and supplies this signal to a storage register in microprocessor 806.
30 an output demodulated data signal from unit 835 is provided to Viterbi decoder 836. Demodulator 835 also generates an output Signal Quality signal, which is indicative of the quality of the signal received from the satellite transmission, and is related to the signal-to-noise ratio of the received signal. Various sources of
35 noise, as well as rain fade, may impair the quality of a received signal. A QPSK demodulator suitable for use as unit 835 is commercially available from Hughes Network Systems of

Germantown, Maryland (integrated circuit type No. 1016212), and from Comstream Corp., San Diego California (No. CD2000).

Decoder 836 uses a Viterbi algorithm to decode and to correct bit errors in the demodulated signal from unit 835.

- 5 Decoder 836 includes internal networks, as known, to synchronize its operation to the incoming demodulated signal in order to effectively decode the demodulated signal.

- After decoder 836 decodes and error corrects the demodulated data signal, the decoded data signal is supplied to a de-interleaver 837. De-interleaver 837 restores the ordering of the data signal to its original sequence, and forms Reed-Solomon blocks (RS blocks), in accordance with known techniques. For this purpose de-interleaver 837 relies upon an 8-bit sync word inserted by the encoder at the beginning of each RS block, thereby providing RS block synchronization. The de-interleaved signal is supplied to a Reed-Solomon (RS) decoder 838.
- 10
- 15

- RS decoder 838 decodes the RS blocks and corrects byte errors within a block. A decoded signal from Viterbi decoder 836 is provided to RS decoder 838 via de-interleaver 837. If decoder 36 uses the proper error correction decode rate to decode the data signal, de-interleaver 837 and Reed-Solomon decoder 838 will operate normally.
- 20

- Thus, a digital multi-channel transmission system has been disclosed and described which allocates television programs to transponders and to time-multiplexed slots in the data stream of a given transponder in a way which is completely transparent to the user, who simply tunes a desired television program by selecting a virtual channel. It has been further explained above, that the key to the smooth operation of this system is the transmission of the master and special channel guides which relate transponder channels and program data positions in the transponder data stream to virtual channel numbers.
- 25
- 30

What is claimed is:

5 1. A television system for receiving a plurality of
digitally-encoded television programs, comprising:

means for selecting a particular digital data transmission
channel from a plurality of digital data transmission channels
containing a desired one of said digitally-encoded television
programs in response to a control signal, at least one of said data
10 transmission channels also including television program schedule
data;

user-operable data entry means for entering data;

control means coupled to said selecting means and to said
data entry means for generating said control signal in response to
said user-entered data; and

15 said control means selecting a virtual channel from a
plurality of virtual channels in response to said user-entered data,
each virtual channel being subject to reassignment to a different
one of said a plurality of digital data transmission channels, said
20 television program schedule data defining the relationship of each
of said television programs to respective ones of said plurality of
digital data transmission channels.

25 2. The television system of claim 1 wherein, television
signals of each of said television programs is transmitted in
compressed form, and said television system includes means for
decompressing signals of said television programs for display.

30 3. The television system of claim 2 further
comprising, on-screen graphics generation means for generating a
matrix of broadcast times and virtual channels corresponding to a
schedule of said television programs in response to said television
35 program schedule data.

4. The system of claim 3 wherein, a user selects one of said virtual channels from said displayed television schedule matrix and in response said controller selects a corresponding
5 digital data transmission channel for reception of said television program.

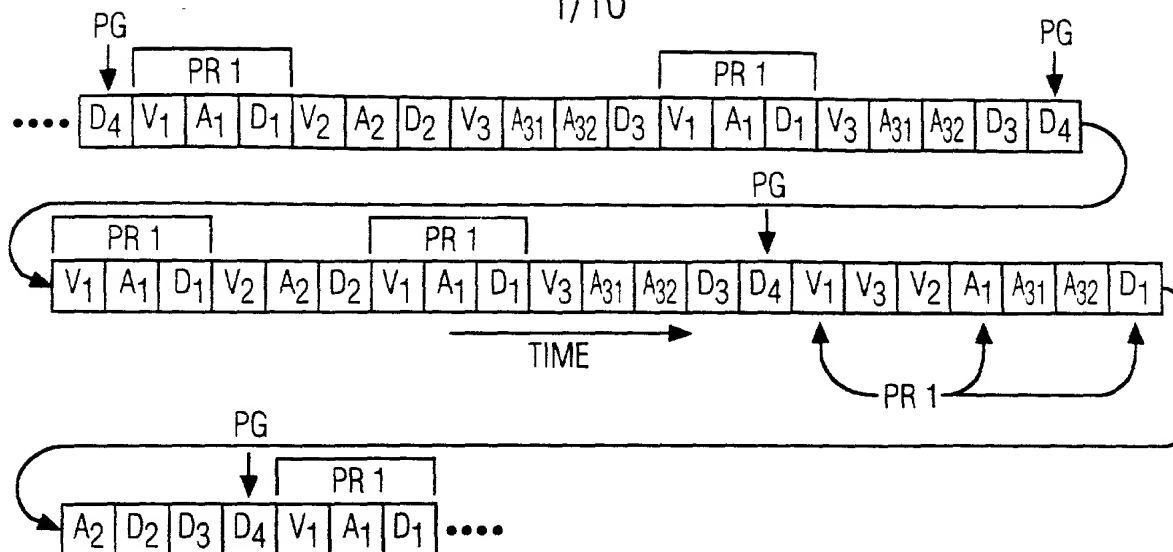
5. A television system for receiving a plurality of digitally-encoded television programs, comprising:
10 means for selecting a particular data channel, which may be allocated to one or more transmission channels each of said data channels containing a desired one of said digitally-encoded television programs, in response to a control signal, at least one of said transmission channels also including television program
15 schedule data;
user-operable data entry means for entering data;
control means coupled to said selecting means and to said data entry means for generating said control signal in response to said user-entered data, and
20 said control means selecting a data channel in response to said user-entered data, each data channel being subject to reallocation to a different one of said plurality of transmission channels, said television program schedule data defining the relationship of each of said television programs to respective ones
25 of said plurality of transmission channels.

Handwritten:
Nearly added same 6 + 7
see "1"

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A television system for receiving a plurality of digitally-encoded television programs includes circuitry for selecting a particular digital data transmission channel from a plurality of digital data transmission channels containing a desired
5 digitally-encoded television program in response to a control signal, at least one of the data transmission channels also including television program schedule data. The system also includes user-operable data entry circuitry for entering data, and
10 a controller for generating the above-noted control signal in response to user-entered data. The controller selects a virtual channel from a plurality of virtual channels in response to user-entered data, each virtual channel being subject to reassignment to a different one of said a plurality of digital data transmission
15 channels, the television program schedule data defining the relationship of each of the television programs to respective ones of the plurality of digital data transmission channels.

1/10



V₁ A₁ D₁

PROGRAM #1 SIGNAL COMPONENT PACKETS

V₂ A₂ D₂

PROGRAM #2 SIGNAL COMPONENT PACKETS

V₃ A₃₁ A₃₂ D₃

PROGRAM #3 SIGNAL COMPONENT PACKETS

D₄

PROGRAM GUIDE PACKETS

V_i

VIDEO PROGRAM i

A_i

AUDIO PROGRAM i

D_i

DATA PROGRAM i

FIG. 1

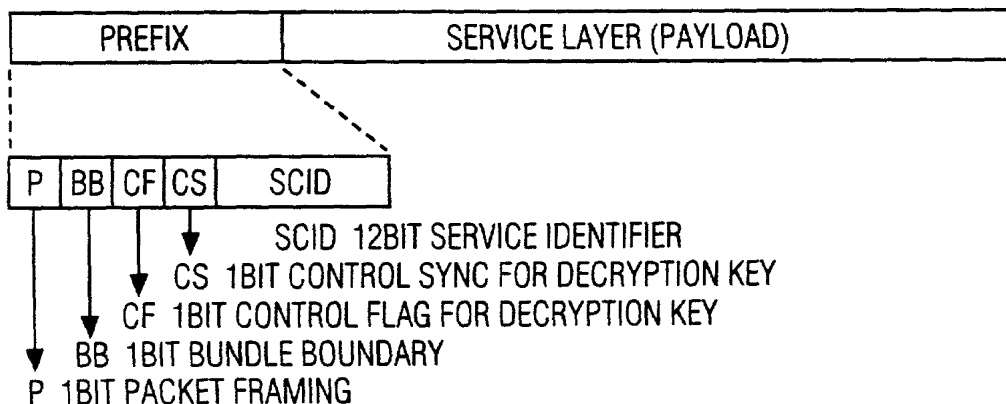


FIG. 2

110

CH 150					7:35 PM		
Program Guide							
7:30 PM		8:00 PM		8:30 PM		9:00 PM	
HBO 102	OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY			FREE PREVIEW		DREAM ON	
CBS 106	EVENING NEWS	FRANNIE'S TURN		BROOKLYN BRIDGE		RAVEN	
WTTV 150	MASH	IMMEDIATE FAMILY					
CINE 210	EYEWITNESS	FUN CITY			DOUBLE TROUBLE		
CNN 305	PRIME NEWS	BOTH SIDES		RELIABLE SOURCES		WORLD NEWS	
USA 422	COUNTER STRIKE			QUANTUM LEAP			
MORE		MOVIES		SPORTS		OTHER	
				ALL		EXIT	

FIG. 3

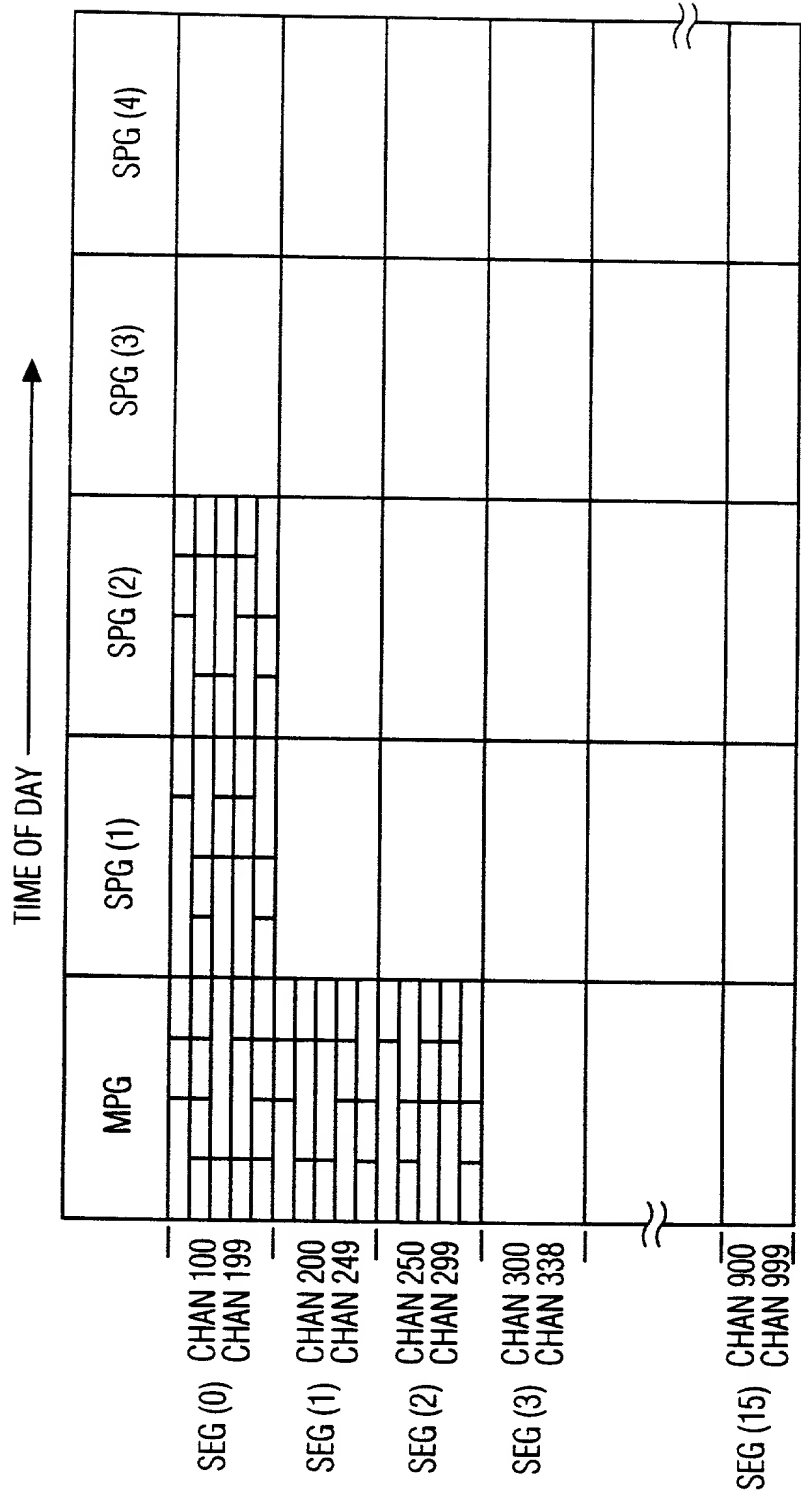
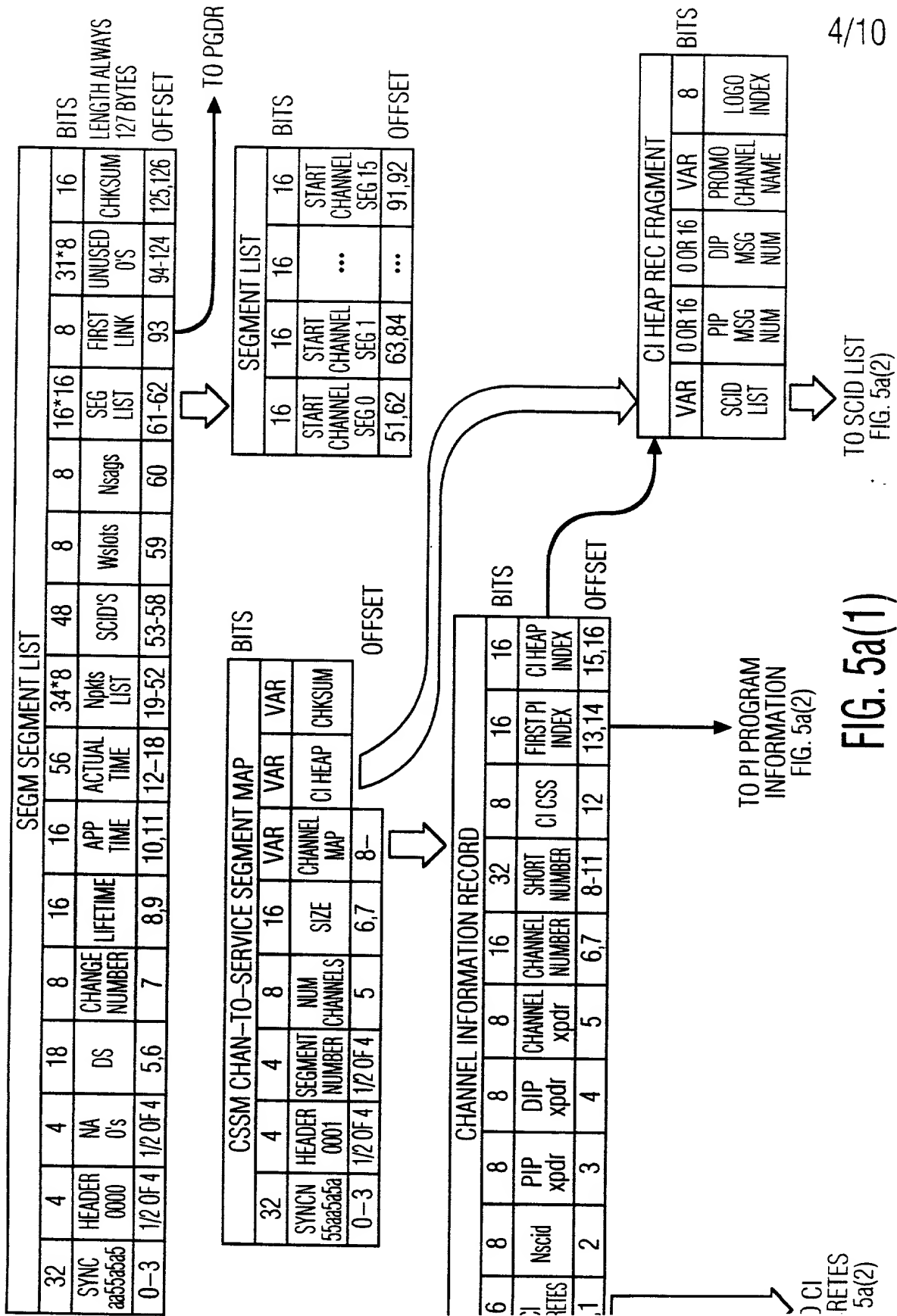


FIG. 4



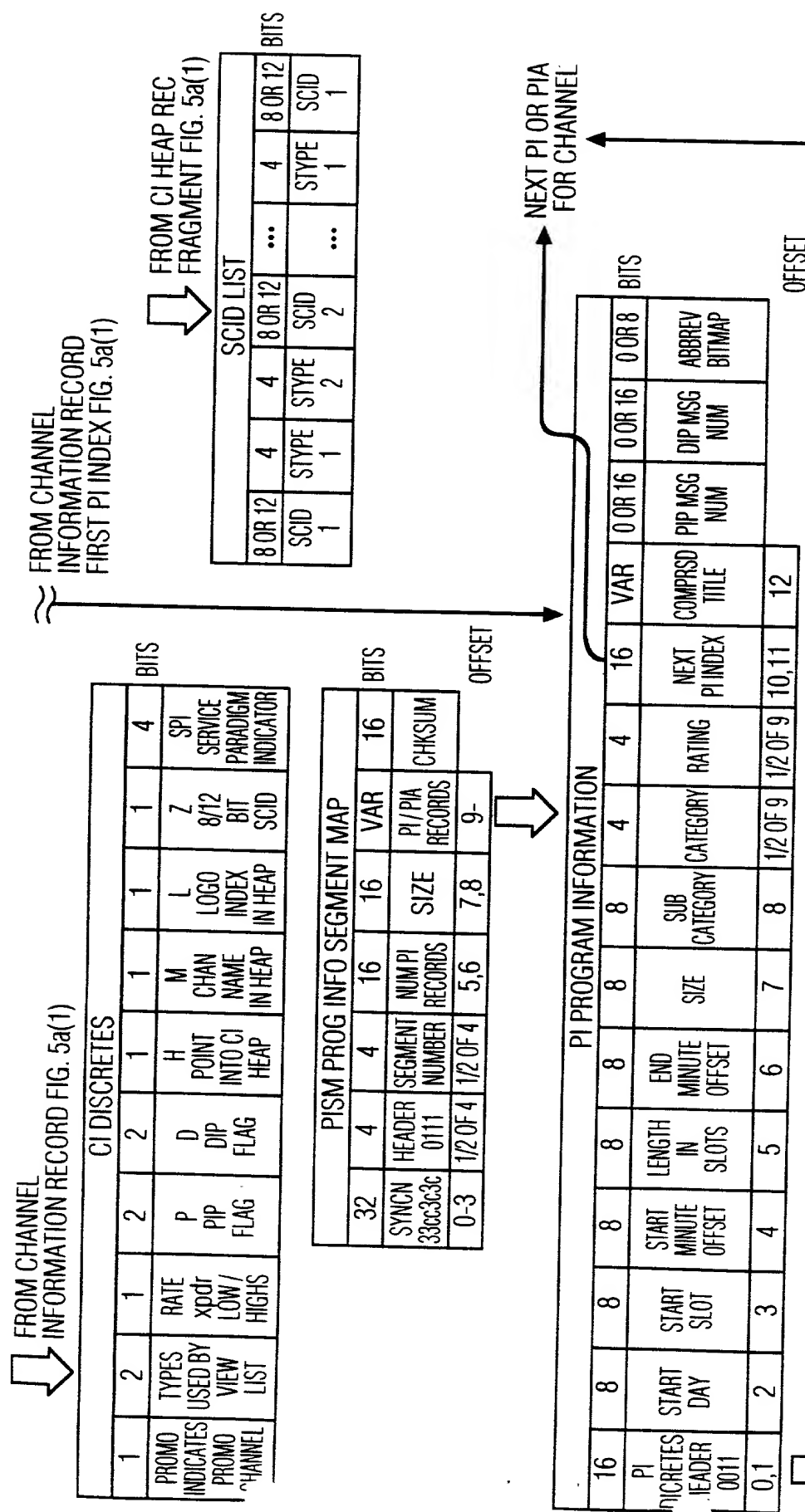


FIG. 5a(2)

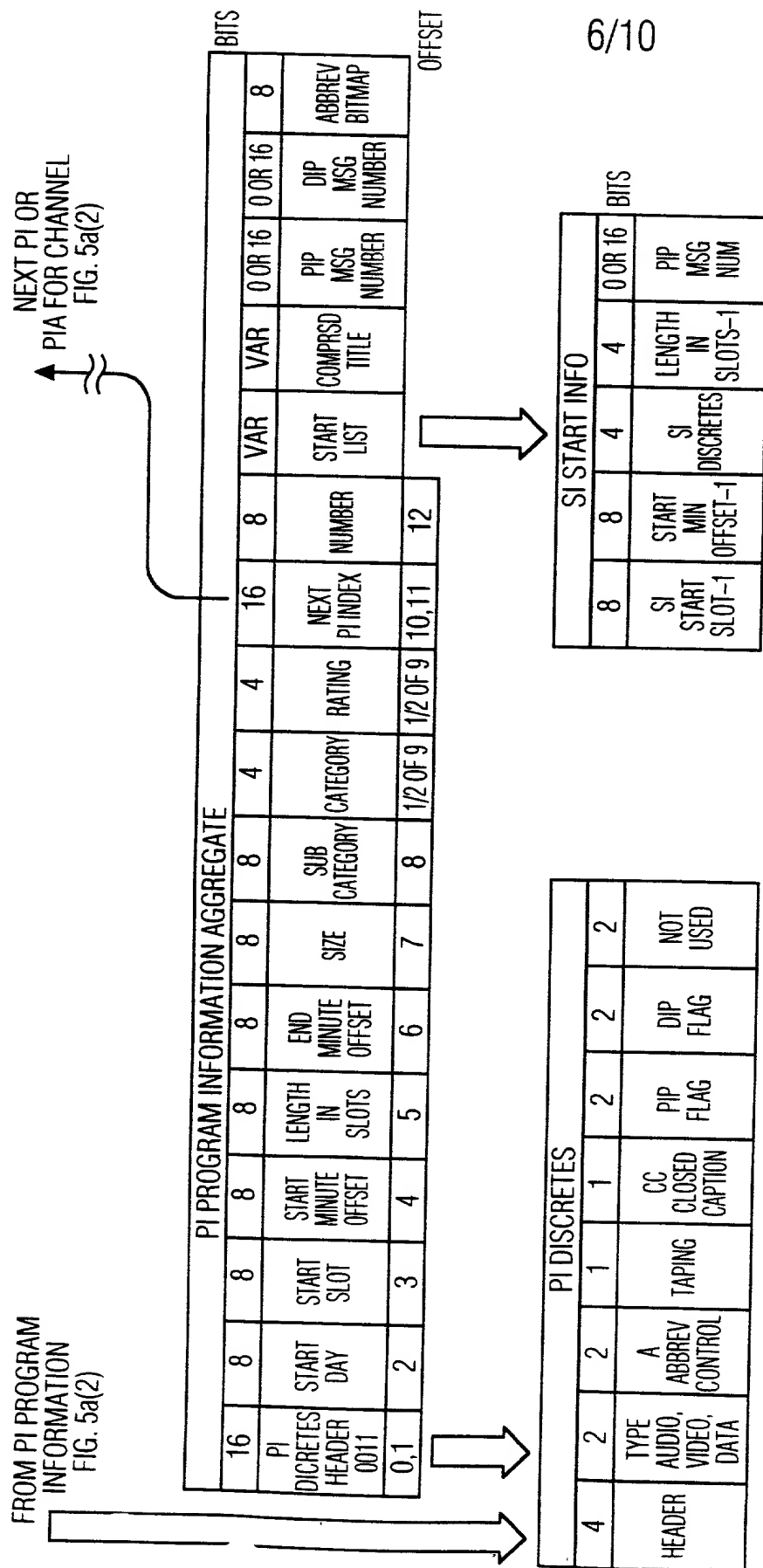


FIG. 5a(3)

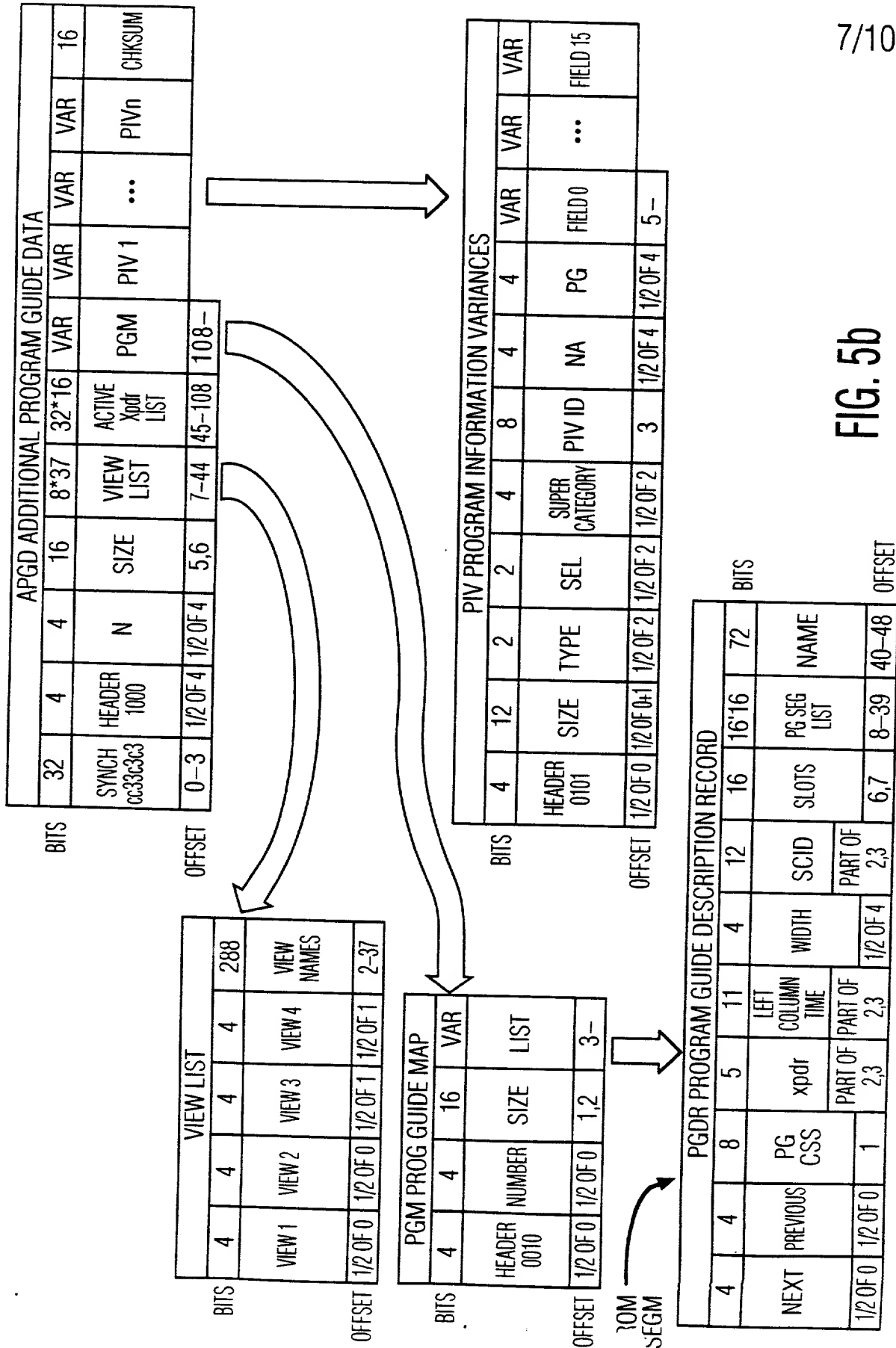


FIG. 5b

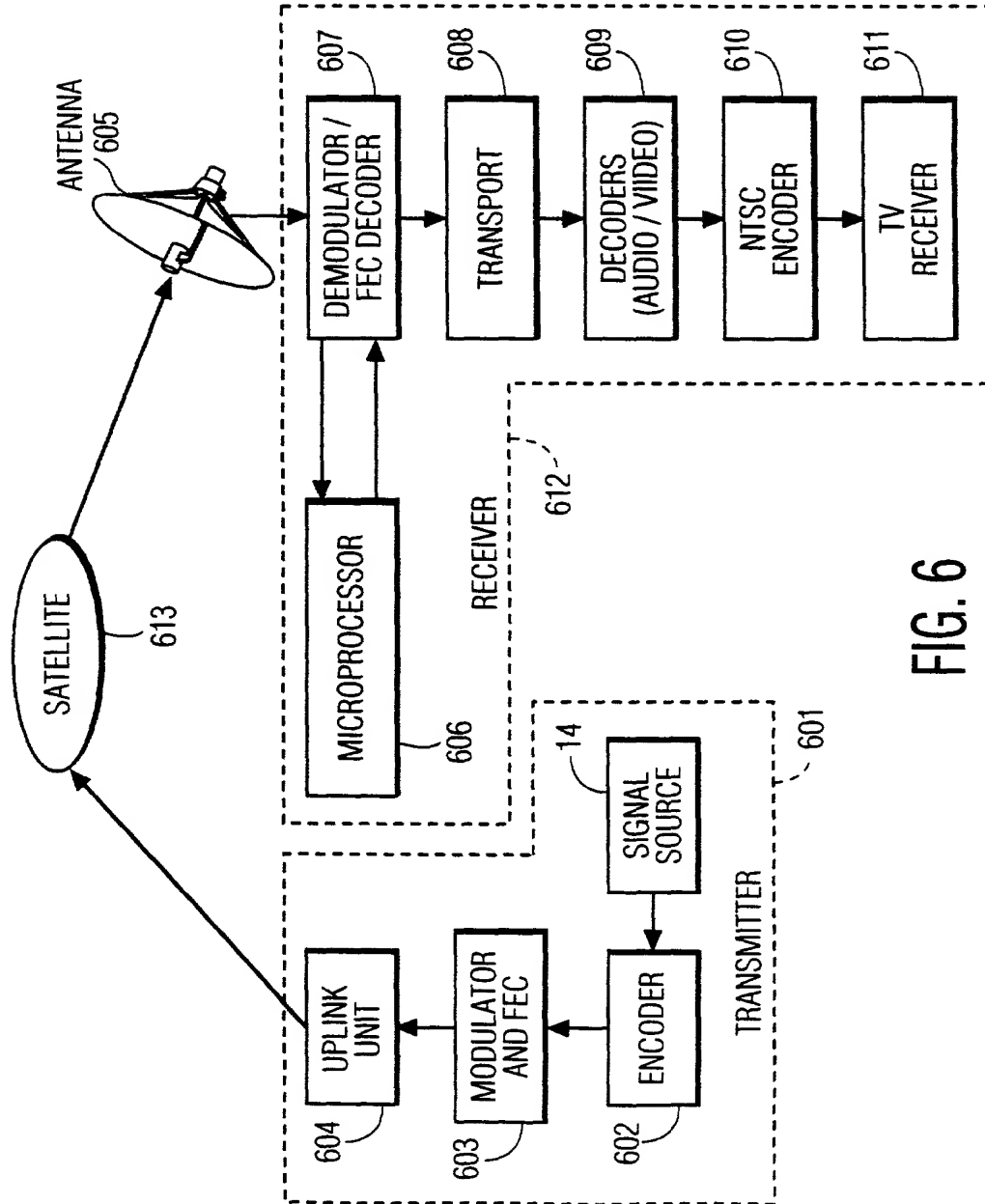


FIG. 6

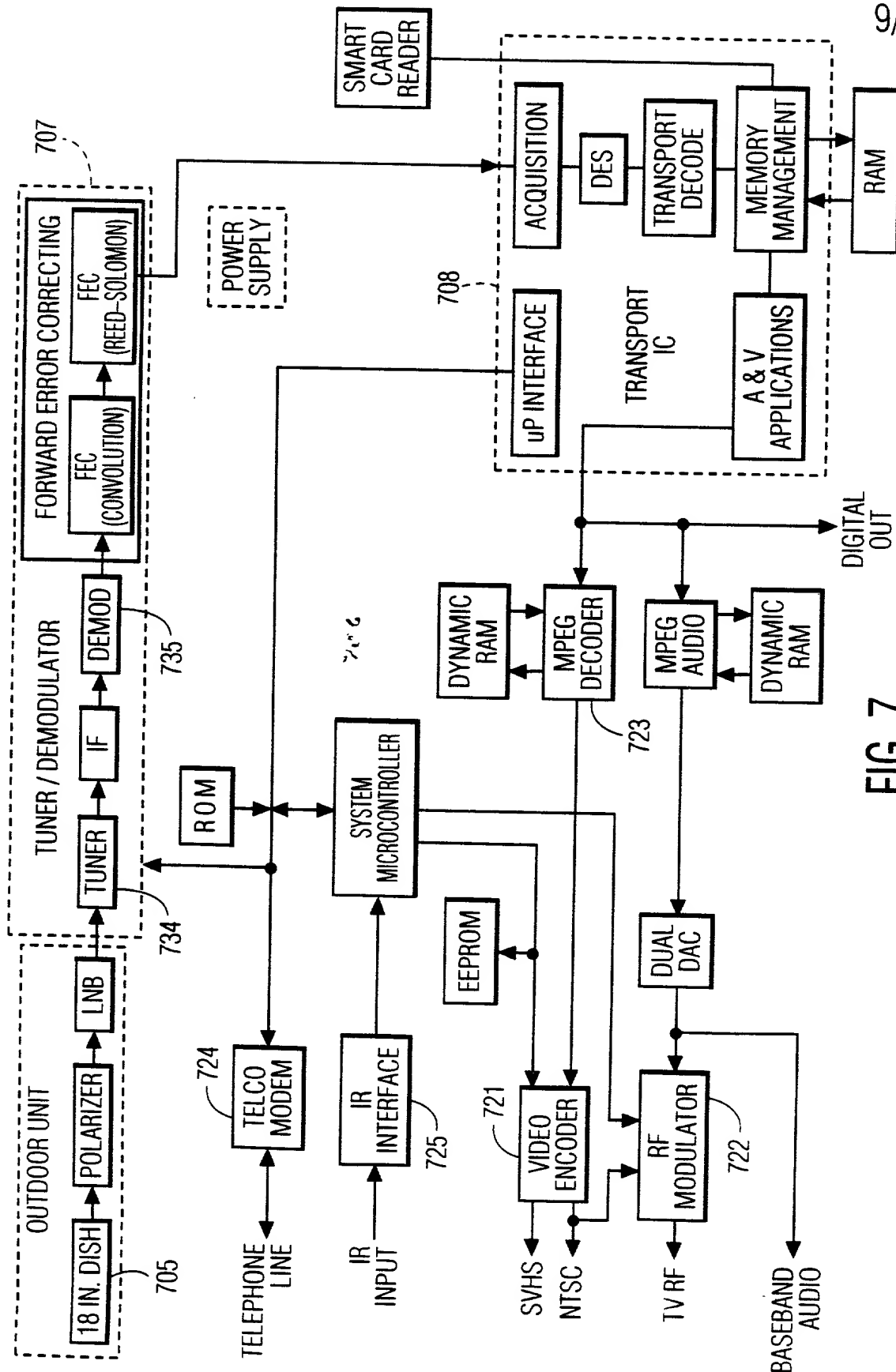


FIG. 7

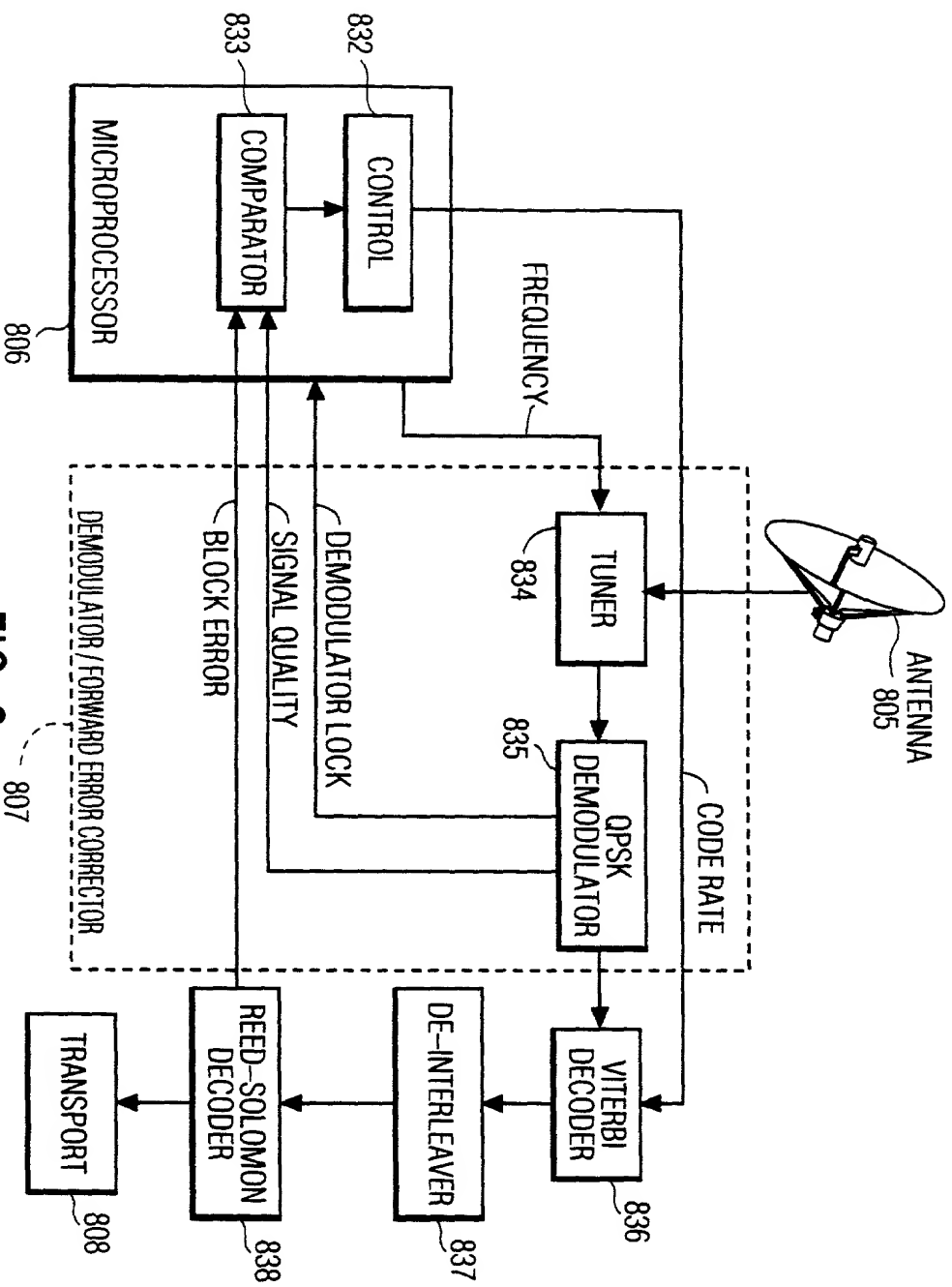


FIG. 8